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ABSTRACT

This study explores the contradictory two-fold role of the student teacher who is both a student and a teacher. Student or intern teaching is seen as a formalized transition from the role of student to that of teacher and, as such, a transitional period characterized by ambivalent feelings, insecurity, and contradictions. Participants in the study were eight secondary language arts student interns completing a 14-week teaching internship which is the final requirement of a 5-year teacher education program. Collected data included structured and unstructured interviews, twice-weekly journal accounts, classroom observations, and a preliminary questionnaire surveying demographic data and teaching beliefs/ideals. Three common themes were explored: (1) the task of becoming a real teacher; (2) interpersonal relationships; and (3) curriculum and instruction--planning driven by time. Results indicated: (1) while the intern-teacher is put in charge of a classroom, the final accountability rests with the cooperating teacher; (2) the intern is neither a full-fledged student nor a full-fledged teacher--an uneasy dichotomy for some; (3) the intern does not have a sense of "ownership" of the class; and (4) the intern evaluates students while in turn being evaluated by supervisors. The problems inherent in this situation are discussed. Twenty-four references are included. (JD)

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# Language Arts Roll Call:

## 24 Students Present . . . 23 are Seventh Graders

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Vignettes of the Intern-teacher Role

Says Ilsa[1],

> I'm somewhere between the kids and being teacher,
>
> I have not yet been a real teacher in this experience. Like one of my kids said [this] to me the other day, "Why are we doing this?" ... I said, "Because I'm an English teacher." "You're not a real teacher yet."
>
> . . . things like . . . teacher appreciation breakfast yesterday. I had absolutely no desire to go. Absolutely none. On the one hand, I don't feel like a real teacher in this building. Number two, I wouldn't know anybody."

In an interview, Simon describes his status,

> Interviewer: So when you leave here (the internship setting), you'll leave with your briefcase. You won't have your Kleenex box to take home or your coffee cup...
>
> Simon: My students use up all the Kleenex and I don't drink coffee, so none of that.
>
> Interviewer: No personal belongings?
>
> Simon: No. Not even my flies are mine [Lord of the Flies bulletin board].
>
> Interviewer: They belong to the school?
>
> Simon: No [name] said she'd like to have them so I'll give them to her . . .
>
> Interviewer: Did you have your own mail box here?
>
> Simon: They...didn't even put me on the, their sign-in roster. They said they were going to and I had to, all these weeks, I had to sign my name at the bottom . . .
>
> Interviewer: How many teachers do you know by name out here?

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[1]All names are pseudonyms.

Simon: I don't know hardly any of them by first name...you can't say their name, first name in front of the students and I don't see them that much when students aren't around...Mrs. [name], I call her Mrs. [name]. Everybody calls her [her first name] . . .

Interviewer: ...when you're sitting and talking like you did after class today and you use names...or wouldn't you use names?

Simon: I don't think really we've had occasion to use, use names. I don't, I don't know if I've ever heard her call me by my first name. A couple kids in fifth hour try to get away with it [laughs].

Interviewer: But not your cooperating teacher.

Simon: I don't think I've ever heard her. Maybe she doesn't know what it is [laughs].

Says Linus,

I just think it will be a lot more enjoyable when it's my own room . . . It makes a lot of difference and you don't have the pressure of being evaluated every day by someone observing you, seeing what you're doing right and doing wrong . . . I think the biggest thing is your own mailbox because occasionally, my stuff gets stuck in her mailbox. It sounds really stupid. That's not why I want to be a teacher, so I can I have my own mail box, but...I don't know. It's just stuff like that that may make you feel like you belong and you should be there . . . It's not like I own the kids, or anything, but I own the class to the extent that they are solely my own responsibility and I'm there from start to finish. Right now, to the kids, I'm kind of, some big kid that hangs around.

Finally, according to Terry,

Even though my cooperating teacher isn't in the room 100% of the time while I'm teaching, I think that maybe her presence is still felt by the students. But I think slowly they're coming to realize that if they have a problem they need to come to me and not to her. She's real helpful, you know, students go to the one they're used to when they have problems . . . sometimes one of them will go to her and she'll just point to me and let them know that they're supposed to come to me . . . It was an interesting situation...a boy was picking

> on another boy in class, not physically, just verbal shots . . . and the boy who was being picked on came up to me after class and said, "If [name] says one more thing to me during the next class, I'm going to get up and hit him." And I looked at him and said, "Not in my class you're not going to." And he said, "This isn't your class. This is [cooperating teacher's name] class." And I said, "No, this is my class when I'm teaching, this is my class. And anyway, I think she would agree with me that she does not want you fighting in her class, either." So I think he's pretty much gotten the message now. I'm the authority in class. And it's really nice because she backs me up.

Preservice field experiences have been an intensive focus of educational research and evaluation for three decades (Hoy, 1967; Hoy & Rees, 1977; Iannaccone, 1963; Iannaccone & Button, 1964; Tollefson & Kleinsasser, in preparation; Zeichner, 1980). An examination of field placements and other preservice teacher education experiences has led to in depth documentation of the way teachers talk about their practice, how they learn to teach, and how they become experts at it. Questions about the teaching-learning setting and complex interactions of teachers and students are examined through ethnographic or information processing methods (Berliner, 1987; Yinger, 1977). Differences in the way novices and experts approach pedagogical dilemmas are one set of products from this research direction (Berliner, 1987; Clift, 1988; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Koehler, 1985; Yon, 1988).

Being a student at the same time one is supposed to be a teacher is an under-investigated aspect of field experiences. This two-fold role is a potentially critical variable in the development of teaching experience and expertise. Being a student-teacher is inherently contradictory. At the same time that

student-teaching or its equivalent caps one experience (undergraduate teacher preparation), it introduces another (full-teaching responsibility). Student- or intern-teaching is, in essence, a formalized transition from the student's side of the desk to the teacher's side of the desk. Iannaccone and Button (1964) identify student teaching as a transitional period, characterized by ambivalent feelings, insecurity, and contradictions.

Ostensibly, one of the goals of field experiences is to buoy insecurity of the preservice teacher by having him or her experience the real practice of a teacher. A second goal of field experience provides the preservice teacher an opportunity to test theoretical knowledge from course work in pedagogy and educational foundations, e.g., educational history, philosophy, and psychology, and apply it in content fields such as math, history, or language arts. Koehler's investigation (1985) of preservice teachers suggests that inexperienced teachers have different informational needs than experienced teachers have. Since novice teachers do not exhibit the cognitive structures or schema in which to place much of the pedagogical work they encounter, Koehler argues that it is futile to try to prepare novice teachers to act like experienced or expert teachers.

While field experiences provide grist for considerable debate among practitioners, teacher educators, and educational psychologists (see Lanier & Little, 1986, for a review of the teacher education literature), we know little about what actually occurs during field experiences, particularly from the perspec-

tive of the student- or intern-teacher. Koehler (1985) suggests, therefore, that a productive investigative focus would be a description of "the cognitive schema acquired and used by preservice students as they pass through teacher education programs" (p. 27).

This paper is a presentation of findings specific to intern teachers' reflections on the student-teacher role. The data reported here are part of a larger investigation that documented the reflections-in-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) of language arts intern teachers.

## Method

Participants. Eight (four males, four females) secondary language arts student interns completing a 14 week teaching internship participated in the investigation. The internship was the final requirement, and second major field experience (six weeks of student teaching preceded the teaching internship), of a five year teacher certification sequence at a major teaching-research institution in the Midwest. Interns completed baccalaureate degrees prior to both field experiences. With the exception of a 31-year-old male, all of the interns were 22 or 23 years old at the time of the study. The 14-week teaching placements represented the full range of grades 7-12 language arts, e.g., senior high (grades 10-12) composition, literature, grammar, and speech/forensics, and junior high (grades 7-9) reading, writing, grammar, and spelling.

Study Design and Data Analysis. Consistent with a qualitative research approach (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; and Yin, 1984), a variety of data were collected over a seven month period of time. This served to triangulate the findings, a process of collecting data which represent multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon to build a trustworthy and credible case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data included structured and unstructured interviews, twice-weekly journal accounts, classroom observations, and a preliminary questionnaire surveying demographic data and teaching beliefs/ideals. Data were collected, analyzed, and presented consistent with one of the assumptions of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), e.g., the research participants were co-investigators. Throughout the study, member-checks established the accuracy of on-going data analysis by the investigator. Formal member-checks occurred at the conclusion of the study, as interns read and reacted to their individual case studies for accuracy.

Categories of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) were used to analyze data and pose hypotheses about the developing practice of the participants, their epistemologies of practice. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant-comparative method was the analytic technique. The analyses yielded eight, separate, analytic case studies that were subjected to pattern-matching (Yin, 1984). The pattern-match produced a single case study, or analytic representation of a language arts intern.

Analysis Results. A content analysis of each case produced themes which characterized the unique teaching practice for each intern. See Table 1.

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Table 1 about here.

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Pattern-matching the eight cases yielded three common themes: a) the task of becoming a real teacher; b) interpersonal relationships; c) and curriculum and instruction--planning driven by time. See Table 2.

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Table 2 about here.

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The task of becoming a real teacher. All of the interns identified classroom ownership as one characteristic of becoming a real teacher. For these secondary language arts novices, ownership may be synonymous with instructional authority which represents belonging, responsibility, and permanence. In every case, the cooperating teacher not only modeled ownership, he or she maintained ownership overtly or covertly in one or a combination of four ways.

The cooperating teacher's physical presence is one facet of ownership. Simply being within eyesight or earshot, the cooperating teacher maintained control of/responsibility for the students, e.g., monitored entrances and exits, answered student questions even in the presence of the intern teacher, remained

the real authority for language arts students and the language arts intern teacher. The effectiveness of the cooperating teacher's right of ownership and authority was demonstrated by the interns' self descriptions: on the bench, a side kick, a co-pilot, followed by a cloud, the second in command, a big kid, but above all, a student-teacher. This was corroborated by student characterizations of the interns, "You're not the real teacher."

Supporting this analytic conclusion are data describing the interns' accompanying the cooperating teacher to lunch, committee meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or other instructional and curricular meetings. Present, but not always acknowledged, i.e., left out of the conversation or not introduced, interns reported feeling awkward, unnecessary, out-of-place. Not crucial to the continuing instructional pace, several interns (Anne, Linus) realized that since they were teaching-interns, being sick and missing school didn't present the same kind of problem or obligation it might have caused had they been the teacher in charge. Their cooperating teachers were there to cover classes in their places.

Even when the intern teacher was standing at the front of the classroom, presumably the authority, he or she was bypassed for the cooperating teacher--present or not. Observational data, for example, showed intercom interruptions calling for the cooperating teacher or hand-delivered messages from the central office. Some of the teaching interns (Ilsa, Greaser, and Simon)

demonstrated their student-like roles or deference to cooperating teachers' positions by referring to them consistently as Mr., Ms., or Mrs. throughout the internship. Lastly, several interns were sensitive to the cooperating teachers' readiness for the internship to be over and to return to their classrooms. They described their cooperating teachers as antsy, bored, and anxious to take the class back.

A second element of ownership included what will be identified here as the artifacts of teaching, e.g., grade book, teacher's desk, mailbox, daily announcement bulletin, reserved parking place. This absence of ownership and, therefore, absence of belonging, is demonstrated by being asked to share the teacher's desk and daily announcements, not having an individual mailbox, being loaned the grade book just long enough to record grades and complete down slips, or, conversely, not being trusted to complete grades independently. By describing themselves as transients or mobile, that is, not having anything to pack up upon leaving the teaching-learning setting at the end of the 14 weeks, the interns depicted their non-status in the learning environment. At a minimum, everyone had a desk or chair--except the intern teacher. Greaser, the only intern returning to the same student teaching site, was also the only intern active, by his request, in assistant coaching duties, and an exception to this characterization. He had a locker in the coaches' room and alluded to positive relationships with the male coaching staff whom he joined during lunch-time when they played chess.

A third face of ownership can be related to time and interpersonal relationships. Participants in this study described the 14-week teaching internship as being both too long and too short. It was too long to be in someone else's classroom, with someone else's students, and someone else's curricular and instructional plan. It was too short, however, to establish the rapport with students necessary for a development of interpersonal relationships they deemed important for learning (one of three undergirding themes emerging from pattern-matching the cases).

In an institutional setting, where a smooth operation functions chiefly by being on time, staying on time, and maintaining a curricular and instructional pace, coming into the classroom <u>in medias res</u>, in the middle of things, was disruptive for all of the intern teachers. Feeling out of place--neither student nor teacher--was exacerbated by learning names and institutional or classroom routines well after they had been established for everyone else in the learning setting. Interns acknowledged their confusion or philosophical conflict in struggling to gain a sense of goals and objectives for the class (Anne, Linus, Simon) and/or acceptance of the status quo for 14 weeks since it was not their responsibility anyway (Chris, Greaser, Ilsa, Sean, Terry).

Just as starting in the middle of things was uncomfortable, so was leaving before the semester's natural completion. The interns hurried to complete units, i.e., read books, plays,

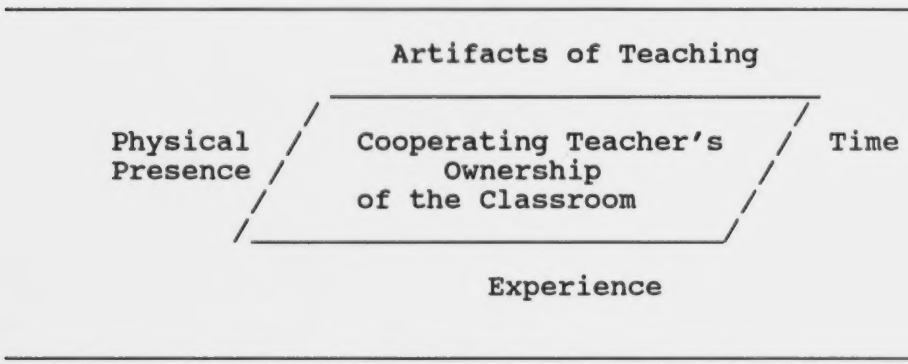
poetry, mark and return papers, and record their final grades. Most of them missed the end-of-the-year ceremonies that formalize school's closure for both student and teacher--commencement, the prom, field trips, classroom parties, general clean-up activities. Significantly, it is at events like commencement that teachers are recognized and thanked by the school and civic communities for their service to students (Note: Terry attended an end of the year banquet for teachers and Linus returned for the prom).

The cooperating teacher possesses a fourth criterion of classroom ownership--experience. Experience is exemplified by having instructional and curricular veto power over the intern-teacher, files of tested materials and ideas--on hand and/or in mind. It is more, if not better, knowledge than the knowledge the intern possesses, i.e., what will work with a particular group of students in a particular time frame, less of a trial and error approach. At least four of the cooperating teachers were departmental or building leaders. In short, interns looked to experience as the producer of confidence, an important resource in a setting that is complex, changing, and ambiguous.

The four factors described above firmly establish classroom ownership in the hands of the cooperating teacher. While bridling under the yoke of ownership (Linus described himself as his cooperating teacher's property), the majority of interns acknowledged the graciousness of their cooperating teachers for taking them in. It was as if the interns were, indeed, homeless

teachers or educational transients. Figure 1 depicts the four barriers of classroom ownership for student- or intern-teachers.

Figure 1. Classroom ownership: Four Barriers.




## Summary and Discussion

Results of the investigation presented here suggest that the student- or intern-teacher role is one of dramatic tension: a) the intern is put temporarily in charge but not accountable in any way that he or she considers important, e.g., assigning grades, planning beginnings and endings, being autonomous; b) the intern is responsible and accountable to the school and the students <u>through</u> the cooperating teacher, but not independently; c) the intern is neither a full-fledged student nor a fullfledged teacher--not at home in either setting; d) the intern is assigned to a classroom and a teaching task, but is not the owner of that setting in anyone's eyes--student learners or colleague adults;

and e) the intern is an evaluator of students while being evaluated by a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher, a highly problematic combination of roles for the intern. The investigation provides ample evidence through the case studies of Anne, Chris, Greaser, Simon, that learners and their teaching-interns entered into a social contract, student-to-student, during the university supervisor's evaluations. Following the university supervisor's visit, Anne reports, "They were so excited the next day, the next morning, they were all running in my room, 'What did we get, what did we get?'. And I said, 'We got an A'."

Consistent with previous research (Iannaccone & Button, 1964), these findings support the analysis of student- or intern-teaching experiences as being ambivalent and contradictory. Analyses of the internship experience revealed not only the procedural and management aspects of teaching previously identified (Hoy, 1967; Hoy and Rees, 1977; and Iannaccone, 1963), it delineated four specific facets of classroom ownership. Significantly, at the same time that classroom ownership in the hands of the cooperating teacher impedes the teaching intern from feeling like a real teacher, it is classroom ownership that the intern experiences <u>by not having,</u> and wants for him or herself. This suggests an extension, at the preservice level, of what Lortie (1975) calls a teacher's apprenticeship of observation, the time all teachers once logged as elementary and secondary students watching their teachers and the process of schooling.

This conclusion pinpoints serious obstacles to the develop-

ment of teaching expertise through field experiences, particularly extended, or graduate level, field experiences proposed by recent teacher education reform manifestos (e.g., the Holmes Group). If the purpose of student- or intern-teaching placements is to learn how to think and perform like a professional (Holmes Group, 1986), that goal is thwarted by the power of classroom ownership as perceived by both interns and cooperating teachers.

In an empirical study (Tollefson & Kleinsasser, in preparation) investigating cooperating teachers' ratings of intern teachers as above average, average, and below average, free response comments by cooperating teachers clearly indicate that they view themselves as doing the interns a favor by letting them practice in their classrooms:

-- The student "was given responsibility for the class,"

-- "I let the student assume teaching responsibility earlier than I have in the past."

-- "I could not give this student complete responsibility for instruction" (p. 6).

Ironically, the ambiguous student-teacher role sends an unambiguous message to the student- or intern-teacher: one learns how to become a real teacher in one's own classroom.

As the Holmes Group member institutions develop recommendations for the group's second report, Tomorrow's Schools, addressing themes such as models of learning and conceptions of teachers' work and the organization of schools (Holmes Group, 1988), the study of ownership as a critical aspect of a classroom's culture merits further investigation. Specifically, is

classroom ownership important to novice and experienced teachers in other secondary education fields? Is classroom ownership a salient variable of learning how to teach for cooperating-teachers and intern-teachers at the elementary education level? Continued non-empirical and empirical investigations of these questions are appropriate follow-ups to the inquiry reported here.

Results of these analyses challenge and further explicate theories of teacher development, specifically, Fuller's three stage conceptualization of teacher development--personal survival, attention to situational information, and helping students one-on-one through instructional diagnosis (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975). Despite the fact that it was a second major field experience, the intern-teacher role of the participants in this investigation disabled interns from making decisions relating to the physical setting of the classroom, short and long term curriculum planning, and instructional implementation in a personally preferable style. The internship emphasized a survival-seeking role, a role that is strategically compliant as opposed to professionally assertive, independent, or in the frame work of Schon's model, problem setting. This conclusion is supported by the salience of positive interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues as an important aspect in the epistemology of practice articulated by novice language arts teachers. Tollefson and Kleinsasser (in preparation) report a similar finding.

Continued investigation of the student- or intern-teacher role is necessary to examine the effects of extended field placements, in this case, student-teaching followed by teaching internships. Do field placements produce knowledge about teaching or subvert the production of that knowledge? Analyses resulting from this study reveal little evidence that internship experiences were built upon student teaching experiences, i.e., that intern teaching was qualitatively different from student teaching. Rather, both field experiences underscored the message --delivered by the cooperating teacher--that real teachers have their own classrooms and that is where real teaching experience begins.

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Table 1

Thematic Summary of the Case Studies.

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Anne:

1) The humanity of teaching: building and modeling positive interpersonal relationships;
2) Ambiguity: English curriculum versus student self concept building; deference to the cooperating teacher's ownership of the classroom versus implementing her own style of management and instruction; gaining experience versus disappointment in the placement;
3) Time and the rhythm of school;
4) Non-teaching priorities.

Chris:

1) Ownership and responsibility for the teaching setting;
2) Caring, cooperation among students, and growth of group rapport;
3) Growth of self awareness;
4) The importance of experience in learning to teach
5) Effective planning and teaching practices.

Ilsa:

1) Interpersonal relationships;
2) Teaching as performance;
3) Planning and gaining experience through trial and error;
4) The legitimacy of classroom-created knowledge;
5) Teacher ownership and independence in the classroom.

Table 1 (continued)

Linus:

1) Gaining confidence through experience;
2) Making the study of English a low priority for students, as pleasant as possible;
3) Gaining instructional experience through trial and error to find out what will work in the classroom;
4) Acknowledging a teacher's unique, neither right nor wrong approach to teaching English;
5) Tacit knowledge of teaching.

Simon:

1) Imagination and creativity in teaching;
2) Teaching English: organization, planning, evaluation, and expectations;
3) The press of time and the rhythm of school;
4) The student teacher role;
5) Teaching as personal involvement.

Terry:

1) Interpersonal relationships;
2) Implementing a unique teaching style;
3) Ownership and responsibility for the classroom;
4) Time pressures and the rhythm of school;
5) Gaining experience;
6) The character of teaching language arts at the senior high level.

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Table 2

Themes Emerging from Pattern Matching the Case Studies.

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A. The task of becoming a real teacher:
   1. Classroom ownership/constraints of the student teacher role
   2. Gaining experience

B. Interpersonal relationships:
   1. Positive interpersonal relationships, caring, and rapport
   2. Making language arts fun
   3. Literature and composition as subjective, different from math or science content

C. Curriculum and Instruction--planning driven by time:
   1. The rhythm of school, constraints of time, instructional pacing (technical control)
   2. Planning by thematic units, activities, daily plans

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